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THE CFM MEETING

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The recent meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which made substantial progress on the Austrian treaty and agreed in principle on a modus vivendi for Germany, clearly revealed that the Kremlin does not yet believe that the unification of Germany would contribute to eventual Soviet control over Germany. The Kremlin is not ready to relax its grip on Berlin and east Germany and apparently believes that ultimate Soviet objectives can best be obtained by a slight relaxation in cold war tension and continuation of the partition of Germany.

The failure of Vishinsky to build up a consistent propaganda pattern at Paris, as well as his defensive attitude and apparent improvisation, suggests that some basic change took place in the Soviet attitude not long before the meeting. The rude jolt to the USSR from the May elections in the Soviet Zone Germany and continuing difficulties in maintaining Soviet control over the Satellites may have contributed to the Soviet decision to mark time on the German question. More fundamentally, however, the USSR may have estimated that a western economic recession is now approaching more rapidly than was previously believed and consequently that the future will provide more favorable opportunities for the attainment of Soviet objectives in Germany and Western Europe.

The Kremlin probably reasons that the western powers, particularly the US, will be in a weaker position in the event of a depression to oppose the USSR because: (1) an economy-minded US would be more reluctant to give adequate support to the European recovery program and the Military Aid Program; (2) economic difficulties would weaken US-British-French solidarity; (3) Western Europe would be increasingly reluctant to maintain trade restrictions against Eastern Europe; and (4) economic distress would make western Germany more receptive to Soviet overtures. With this in mind, the USSR apparently felt it necessary to preserve the status quo while making certain that the door remained open for future negotiations through the machinery of the CFM. A more truculent Soviet attitude at Paris might have increased western determination to re-arm and impelled western legislatures to continue their financial support of the "cold war" despite economic troubles at home.

E A S T E R N E U R O P E

By means of purging "nationalists" in the Satellite Communist parties, a more aggressive campaign against the Catholic Church, and an intensification of its attacks upon Tito, the Kremlin is continuing its attempts to consolidate its position and control in the Satellite countries. The vigor and intensity of Soviet activity in the Satellite area reflects continuing Soviet concern over the ability of the local Communist regimes to serve Soviet interests. Confronted with growing economic recovery in Western Europe in comparison with economic hardship in the Satellites, a still-defiant Yugoslavia, and a more aggressively hostile Catholic Church, the Kremlin has apparently decided to take prompt and drastic steps toward eliminating the last vestiges of opposition in its uneasy Satellites.

Party Purges The vigorous efforts being made in Hungary and Bulgaria to eradicate "nationalist" deviationists indicate that the Kremlin has not yet solved the problem of "home-grown" Communism. In both countries, the ruling group of Moscow adherents is attacking a prominent nationalist Communist leader in order to make an example of him. Former Bulgarian economic czar Traicho Kostov and ex-Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Rajk have already been expelled from the Communist Party. The Hungarian regime now seeks to destroy Rajk totally by levelling at him the sensational charge of espionage for the US, while the propaganda assault on Kostov, in which even the Cominform journal is being utilized, continues unabated. Both Kostov and Rajk had a substantial party following and had risen to power locally without direct Kremlin support. Their destruction will demoralize anti-Moscow Bulgarian and Hungarian Communists and forestall the rise of any

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Communists who might consider the national interest before that of the USSR.

☐ **Anti-Catholic Drive** The Soviet Union's continuing drive against the Catholic Church is currently being focused on Czechoslovakia, where the probable imminent arrest of Archbishop Beran may follow the pattern established in the recent Mindszenty trial in Hungary. (In Poland the Communist Government is preparing cases against certain Catholic bishops for collaboration with the Nazis.) The Czechoslovak Government is publicly accusing Beran of political activity against the state and will probably arrest him soon on trumped-up charges of treason based upon evidence allegedly found in the Archbishop's personal files. Beran's arrest will immobilize the last effective anti-Communist force in Czechoslovakia. Meanwhile, Soviet determination to eradicate Catholic power and influence in the Satellites has been matched by the increasingly aggressive anti-Communist stand of the Vatican. Communist plans to establish national or Communist-manipulated churches have apparently caused the Vatican to abandon all hope of achieving a modus vivendi in the Satellites and instead to embark on a vigorous campaign to resist Communist anti-Catholic pressure. In addition to stepping up its radio propaganda designed to stiffen Catholic resistance in the Satellites, the Vatican has already meted out severe penalties of excommunication and suspension to Catholics in Hungary and Czechoslovakia who participate in the anti-Church campaign. In addition, the Church may soon issue a fundamental encyclical warning all Catholics in the Soviet orbit against cooperating with the Communists and appealing to the Christian world for aid and intervention. Despite these Vatican moves, however, the Communists retain a definite advantage in the struggle. Basing their strategy on cutting the ties

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binding local Catholic churches with Rome, on separating the Church hierarchy from the parish priests and the people, and on abolishing Catholic control over education, the Communist regimes have the means and determination eventually to destroy all effective Catholic resistance in the Satellites.

Polish Changes In tightening their grip on Poland, the pro-Moscow Communists have continued their slander campaign against the Catholic Church and are grooming Aleksander Zawadski, a faithful Moscow follower, for titular leadership in the Party. Since Gomulka was read out of the Party leadership about a year ago, Zawadski's ascent has been steady and rapid until now he appears to be the Number One prospect to serve as the Party's front man. Service with the Red army and as a political commissar in the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army corps, plus eleven years of political imprisonment, have made Zawadski a convinced and ruthless Communist and a logical Kremlin choice to head the Polish Communist Party and perhaps eventually the Polish Government.

Albanian Weakness The Soviet "penetrationists," who have assumed direct control of the Hoxha administration in Albania, are concentrating their main efforts toward stabilizing the regime on alleviating the nation's transportation difficulties. During 1949, Soviet railway technicians helped open a railroad running between the capitol at Tirana and the principal supply port at Durazzo. Despite the presence and activities of the Soviet representatives in Albania and other Soviet efforts to maintain this weak and distant Satellite outpost, Hoxha remains pessimistic about the future of both himself and his country. His pessimism is based upon: (1) Albania's basic poverty and lack of self-sufficiency; (2) the current hostility of the people toward his pro-Soviet regime; and (3) the isolation of Albania from the rest of the Soviet bloc.

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Tito-Stalin Rift The year old Tito-Stalin rift has widened perceptibly in the past few weeks. The struggle between Yugoslavia and its former partners to the East has apparently now passed the stage of propaganda exchanges on predominantly ideological themes and entered the realm of concrete diplomatic and economic action. This intensified Soviet effort against Yugoslavia is in part necessary in order to buttress the current Kremlin campaign against "nationalist" deviation in the Satellites. More fundamentally, the Kremlin must feel compelled to take more drastic action against Tito because Tito's continued defiance strikes at the very core of the Stalinist concept of Communist expansion and acts as a strong magnet to other Communists with nationalist leanings.

Pressure on Tito The intensification of the Yugoslav-Soviet struggle has been manifested on several fronts. Sparked by an exchange of sharp diplomatic notes between the USSR and Yugoslavia, the Soviet attack has been carried on by Hungary and Albania and strongly supported by Bulgaria. Hungarian-Yugoslav relations have been severely strained by recurring border incidents, the mutual ouster of diplomatic representatives, and a Yugoslav charge of Hungarian espionage activity. Border incidents have also increased on the Yugoslav-Albanian frontier, and Bulgaria has not only intensified the anti-Yugoslav war of nerves by concentrating troops on the Yugoslav border but has expressed an intention to encourage subversive activities within Yugoslavia. Of more far reaching significance, however, has been the tightening of the economic blockade against Tito. Although such a blockade would deprive the Satellites of vitally needed Yugoslav non-ferrous metals, Czechoslovakia and Hungary have already

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reportedly broken off all trade relations with Yugoslavia and similar action by the other Satellites may be planned in the near future. In view of Tito's increasing trade relations with the West, the Kremlin may in fact be anticipating a similar action by Yugoslavia.

☐ **Ability to Resist** Barring an extremely unlikely Soviet decision to overthrow Tito by forceful invasion, the Tito regime will continue to defy the Kremlin and successfully maintain its independence of action at least during 1949. Yugoslav officials are apparently confident of their ability to maintain control in the face of the Soviet-Satellite war of nerves and the more acerbated the conflict becomes, the less likely it is that either Tito or Stalin can find an acceptable basis for the return of Yugoslavia into the Soviet orbit. Even the application by the Soviet orbit of total economic sanctions against Yugoslavia would not result in the collapse of the Yugoslav economy. Tito will undoubtedly be able to survive until substantial imports from the West begin to arrive and any reduction in Yugoslav-Satellite trade would actually place Yugoslavia in a correspondingly more favorable position to fulfill its export commitments to the West.

☐ **Relations with Greece** Meanwhile, the deterioration in Yugoslav-Cominform relations has improved the prospects for an amicable settlement of outstanding Greek-Yugoslav issues. Yugoslav willingness to reach a settlement may have increased as a result of: (1) the belief that the USSR, as indicated by its failure to support Yugoslav claims against Austria at the CFM meeting, will no longer support Yugoslav foreign policy

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in other areas; (2) the realization that establishment of trade with the West will be facilitated by the cessation of Yugoslav support for the Greek guerrillas; and (3) a desire to make its own terms with Greece now in the event that the recent Greek guerrilla "peace offensive" by the Cominformists should result in a prior accord. The Greek Government also has strong reasons for reaching a settlement with Yugoslavia. Although such an agreement would not diminish to any marked degree the immediate ability of the guerrillas to continue their fight in Greece, it would: (1) weaken the morale of the Greek guerrillas and bolster the morale of the Greek population; (2) focus the guilt for aid to the Greek Communists primarily on Albania; and (3) accentuate a possible Soviet desire to remove the present struggle in Greece from the military to the political sphere.

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